**Resistance Meditation**

**Setup:**

Have a set of crayons, a ball, CD player, and colouring books on the table.

**Spoken instructions:**

"This is a group activity experiment. We will start with a few minutes to fill in a form.

"First, have a look at the forms I've handed out. In the first column there are several activities and in the second column there is space to write down how much you would like to do each of them, rating from 1 as something you would least like to do, to 10 for something you would most like to do. Please now could you spend a few minutes filling in this column. Be as honest as possible but if unsure just write rating comes to mind.”

Wait a few minutes for forms to be completed.

"Now, looking at your answers, find the row that you have rated you would least like to do. That is, choose the row you have marked with the lowest number. If you have several items with the same low score, choose one at random, or whichever one irritates you the most.

"Look again at the text for the activity you have marked as a least-favourite. Now imagine, that in a few minutes, I am going to instigate it this activity. Imagine the whole group taking part in it, and how you would feel in the situation.

"If you find the idea awkward, or embarrassing, or it fills you with a sense of dread, that's OK; recognise any first-impressions or feelings, and see if sensations come up. Perhaps you can place it physically in your body, for example as tension in your shoulders, a low sensation in your stomach, a sense of cringing, or perhaps nothing at all.

"We are now going to take that impulse to resist, and any feelings or sensations, into a meditation. If you are comfortable closing your eyes you may do so, or lower your gaze, and hold this situation in mind.

“Take a gentle breath in and out, and then imagine that the whole group is about to start the activity that you have chosen, everyone at once.

“I am hoping for us to explore is an instinctive reluctance or resistance to a situation, one it is awkward or uncomfortable to you, perhaps even condescending, or just something that you would prefer to avoid. Gently try to focus on the sensation of not wanting to do the activity.

"It may be, because you are thinking of a situation that may have a resistance too, that it brings up difficult memories. If this happens, then just to refocus on the description of the activity, and check if any thoughts or body sensations are also coming up.

“Take a slow breath in, and out.

"We don’t need to think hard about this, for example you don't have to know *why* it makes you uncomfortable. You are just exploring the feeling of instinctively pushing against doing something. It may be the situation is uncomfortable, overwhelming, or simply something you don't want to do.

"Focusing on any sensations in the body, take a slow breath in, and a slow breath out.

"This is a sensation of resistance. It is something we are not comfortable with and do not enjoy. This meditation is about recognising resistance as something we all share.

"Again, a slow breath in and out.

"We have each chosen different activities that we are reluctant to do, and each of us would experience these differently. The idea now is to try to focus on these thoughts and engage in inner play - you do not need to avoid what is coming up, it’s a natural reaction. This meditation is intended for you to sit with the awkward, the feeling of resistance, the things that irk you - perhaps even doing this meditation itself irks you - tap into those feelings, we are going to playfully engage with them.

"So again, focusing these thoughts or sensations, take a slow breath in, and a slow breath out. You are not trying to make these feelings go away, but instead tune into them. The idea of being pulled into an activity that you don't want to do. A reluctance to do something that you may find embarrassing, condescending, or a waste of time. Again, tune into your body to see if there is any tension or discomfort.

"Another slow breath in and out.

"Now, take a step back and try to view this resistance or feeling as a part of you who needs a little help or guidance. Think of them as a person, someone within you that already have a relationship with. They are a close part of you, a friend and ally, part of your inner family.

"Taking a slow breath in and out again, and try to visualise this part of you as a person, someone who you are present with.

"Now, mentally take another step back and consider how you look upon this person. For example, if they were a friend or family member, how does it feel to see it? It could be negative, perhaps looking upon them feeling with frustration, as something to get rid of. Or it could be positive, a natural part of day-to-day life.

"If you do feel an irritation, try to imagine softening your gaze, relaxing your shoulders, breathing into your stomach. The feeling is present, but you don't need to do anything with it. Simply accept it, sit with it. This is a moment for them to sit comfortably in silence. You are already being receptive to their needs.

"Another slow breath in and out.

“Again, imagine softening your eyes, give any thoughts, sensations and feelings to simply sit and be present, give them permission to be relaxed in themselves.

"Perhaps this sensation has a voice or a tone that comes to mind, or perhaps words or facial expressions expressing feelings. Whatever comes to mind, treat it as you would a good friend who is struggling, someone that you want the best for in life.

"Once again, a gently breathe in and out.

"Now stepping away a little, wish this part of you well, and step away from them. If you are feeling discomfort, wish it well, breathe again, and gently think that we are all sharing a common experience of discomfort.

"This meditation is an attempt to play with a part of our inner self that we are uncomfortable with. Our personal experiences will have been unique, but the intention in leading this experiment is to tap into a feeling of resistance, reluctance or pushing-back, and see if we can use meditation to playfully engage them to form a healthy relationship with them.

"In drawing this meditation to a close, I would like to thank you for your time, and share the kernel that started it. One day, when I was feeling particularly low, I was irked by feeling something trying to levity on me and that I should play along. I felt an impulsive pushing back, which further lowered my mood. I felt the immediate instinct to push back, and that I was angry with myself for doing that. I wanted to see if I could better play with the sensation by treating it well, and trying to reframe my anger with a more reassuring presence. Then I became curious if these feelings of resistance are universal to all of us, so I wrote this meditation as an experiment to see if it’s something we share. The activity table is intended to be a playful mechanism to hone in on a personal resistance whilst exploring the sensation together.

"Thank you all for taking part on this experimental journey, and if you feel up to it I would be grateful of any feedback.

"So now with a final slow breath in an out now, we bring the meditation to an end.

"Take a few moments to open your eyes, settle back and return to the room.